

OCCASIONAL PAPER.

SOCIETY FOR IRISH CHURCH MISSIONS TO THE ROMAN CATHOLICS.

President.

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF MANCHESTER.

Vice-Presidents.

HON. THE MARQUIS OF BLANDFORD, M.P.
RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY.
RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF CLANCARY.
RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF RODEN.
RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF CAVAN.
RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF BANDON.
RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF LANESBOROUGH.
RIGHT HON. LORD VISCOUNT COMBERMERE.

RIGHT HON. THE VISCOUNT LIFFORD.
RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT BERNARD, M.P.
LORD HENRY CHOLMONDELEY.
RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF CASHEL.
RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF TUAM.
RIGHT HON. LORD DUNSANY.
DR. MACBRIDE, PRINCIPAL OF MAGDALEN HALL, OXFORD.

Committee.

THE HON. CAPTAIN MAUDE.
THE HON. ARTHUR KINNAIRD.
THE HON. SOMERSET MAXWELL.
SIR T. W. BLOMEFIELD, BART.
SIR DIGBY MACKWORTH, BART.
SIR JOHN WARRENDER, BART.
JOSEPH NAPIER, Esq., M.P.
JOHN P. PLUMPTRE, Esq., M.P.
C. A. MOODY, Esq., M.P.
GEO. A. HAMILTON, Esq., M.P.

CHAS. H. FREWEN, Esq., M.P.
REAR-ADMIRAL HOPE.
J. C. COLQUHOUN, Esq.
ANTHONY LEFROY, Esq.
ADMIRAL VERNON HARCOURT.
REV. E. HOLLOND.
REV. DANIEL WILSON.
REV. T. R. BIRKS.
REV. W. CADMAN.
REV. M. M. PRESTON.

REV. T. NOLAN.
W. GARNIER, Esq.
CAPTAIN TROTTER.
JOHN D. PAUL, Esq.
J. E. GORDON, Esq.
ALEX. GORDON, Esq.
JOHN BRIDGES, Esq.
ROBT. B. SEELEY, Esq.
EVAN BAILLIE, Esq.
LT.-COL. ALEXANDER.

Treasurer.

JOHN DEAN PAUL, Esq., Messrs. Strahan, Paul, and Co., Strand.

Honorary Secretaries.

THE REV. ALEX. R. C. DALLAS, M.A., Wonston Rectory, Andover-road.
THE REV. ROBT. BICKERSTETH, M.A., St. John's Church, Clapham.

Clerical Secretary.—THE REV. WM. WILKINSON, B.A.

Assistant Secretary.—JOHN KNOTT, Esq.

Office of the Society.—14 and 15, EXETER HALL, LONDON.

o. 1. OCCASIONAL PAPER. August, 1851.

THE great object of this Society is to promote the evangelization of Ireland, in dependence upon the Divine help and blessing, by means of the simple preaching of the Gospel to the Irish Roman Catholics. The Missionary work which was first adopted by this Society, had been commenced in Galway in the year 1846. An extraordinary progress has been made since that period: multitudes of Romanists have been converted from Popery, and led to make a decided profession of the Gospel. This is evidenced by the increase of the Church, which has arisen for Churches, Schools, and Missionaries, in various parts. The Bishop of Tuam, in whose diocese the

county of Galway is situated, has found it necessary to issue an appeal for the erection of at least eight new churches, and the enlargement of others, without delay, to provide for the increasing congregations of converts, who have come out of Popery. Some of these churches are now in course of erection, and an urgent necessity exists for more funds to commence the building of others. In West Galway alone, upwards of 3000 children are now under regular instruction; all of whom are the children of converted, or still Romanist parents. Some idea of the amazing progress of the work may be gathered from the fact, that whereas in one district alone (West Galway), there were ten years ago not more than 500 Protestants, there are now between 5000 and 6000. The reality of the work has been attested in a variety of ways. Resident English gentlemen who have purchased land in Connemara, and are able from local knowledge and observation to speak on the subject, declare there is every prospect, should the present movement go forward as it has hitherto proceeded, that ere long the whole of that part of Galway will become Protestant. The poor converts themselves have evinced remarkable consistency under the trials of physical privation on the one hand, and violent persecution upon the other. The influence and power of the Romish priesthood have declined in a sensible degree. In the month of June last, the well-known Dr. McHale, who claims to be Archbishop of those parts, went to the village of Derrygimla to hold a Confirmation, of which notice had been previously given several weeks beforehand; notwithstanding all the efforts which had been employed to secure a large attendance at the Romish Chapel, there were not more than 40 persons present when he arrived; and in order to swell the congregation, Dr. McHale sent a message to the neighbouring Union Workhouse, and required a large body of the paupers to attend the service. On the same day the Mission Schools at the same village of Derrygimla were inspected by the Bishop of Tuam, and the Honorary Secretaries of the Society; no notice had been previously given of this visit from the Bishop, but not a single child belonging to the schools, except a very few who were in sickness, was absent; and there were upwards of 170 present. At Clifden, where Dr. McHale remained for the night, an effort was made, upon the evening of the same day, to get up an illumination; but there was only one person in the whole town who would illuminate his windows. At Ballynakill

few Sundays ago, the Priest from the altar, denounced the converts (who are called "Jumpers," as having jumped from one religion to another); and at the same time, upbraiding the people for not attending the chapel better, he declared, "If you do not attend better than you have done lately, the Jumpers will soon have a greater triumph than they have ever had before; for I will nail up the chapel door, and not come here any more." It is about a twelvemonth since two Priests in Oughterard—Fathers Bastiaux and Geraghty—issued an appeal for help, to enable them to withstand the successful efforts which "the heretics" (or Protestants) were using in that town. To the praise and glory of God be it spoken, that neither have those efforts been relaxed, nor the success bestowed on them diminished. On Thursday evening, the 22th of June last, Mr. Bickersteth preached to a full congregation of converts and enquiring Romanists, in the Parish Church of Oughterard; and upon the following Tuesday evening, Mr. Dallas preached in the same Church to a more crowded congregation, the subject of the sermon having been previously advertised as "God's call to leave Rome."

The Reformation is not, however, confined to Galway. The Society is carrying on missionary operations amongst the Roman Catholics, in Dublin, Enniscorthy, Limerick, Belfast; and is affording the means of direct missionary efforts to Local Committees of Clergy in various parts of thirteen counties in Ireland.

In the city of Dublin, there are thirty-two agents employed by the Society, whose daily occupation is to visit amongst the Romanists, and strive to bring them to an acquaintance with the gospel of Jesus. Many instances have come to the knowledge of the Society of conversions, not only from Popery to Protestantism, but, as it may be confidently believed, from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. A class of enquiring Romanists meets, every Tuesday evening, in the School-room of St. Michan's Church, when discussions take place upon the several points in dispute between Protestants and Romanists. The two Honorary Secretaries of the Society were present upon one of these occasions, on the 10th of June last. The discussion commenced at half-past seven, and did not close till past ten o'clock. There were upwards of 700 in the room, of whom a very large number were enquiring Romanists. It was a deeply affecting and interesting spectacle to see the earnestness of this assembly, and the eagerness of the

appeal to the word of God, as often as any text of Scripture was quoted. The Missionary who conducts these weekly Controversial Meetings, is the Rev. Charles McCarthy : upon the occasion now referred to, the Bishop of Cashel, and several clergymen were present. The Priests evince no desire to attend these Controversial discussions. They are afraid to encounter the keen edge of the sword of the Spirit, and dare not openly bring their doctrines to the test of God's word.

In the presence of so much encouragement,—with so large and extensive a field open before them,—with so rich a promise of an abundant harvest,—the Committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions earnestly appeal for renewed help. Strong in faith, and not daring to shrink from the work to which, as they believe, God has called them, they have determined upon opening fresh Missionary stations, and planting the Gospel standard in districts on which hitherto the darkness and idolatry, the superstition and iniquity of Popery, have heavily brooded. They rely upon the zeal of all who know the grace of the Lord Jesus, and have felt in their own hearts the power of the Holy Ghost.

The case is imperative : every day souls are perishing for lack of the bread of life. Who can contemplate the disclosures of the Irish census without a feeling of horror ! That upwards of two millions of souls should have gone into eternity, almost all of them utterly ignorant of the gospel, which alone makes wise to salvation,—which gospel it was in the power of English Christians to have sent to them ! Let us strive to redeem the time, and to seize the great opportunity.

New stations are demanded ;—fresh Churches are required ;—more Missionaries must be sent forth. Let us pray—let us act—let us cheerfully and promptly give, each one according to the ability which God hath given.

Information may be obtained on application to the Secretaries, 14 and 15, Exeter Hall, London ; and the Rev. W. Wilkinson, the Clerical Secretary, will gladly enter into communication with any of the Clergy who may be disposed to open their pulpits for the advocacy of the Society's object, or to aid it by the formation of Parochial Associations.

Annual Subscriptions and Donations to the Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics will be received by the Treasurer, John Dean Paul, Esq., at Messrs. Strahan, Paul, and Co.'s, Strand ; at Messrs. Williams, Deacon, and Co.'s, Birch-lane ; at Messrs. Herries, Farquhar, and Co.'s, St. James's-street ; and by Messrs. Hatchard and Son, Piccadilly ; Messrs. Seeley, Fleet-street, and Hanover-street ; and Messrs. Nisbet and Co., Berners-street.—Communications are requested to be addressed to the Assistant-Secretary, John Knott, Esq., Nos. 14 and 15, Exeter Hall, London.

